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Upcoming Conferences of Interest in Military Medicine and Infectious Diseases

Several important conferences concerning infectious diseases, antimicrobial agents, and the military are being held this summer and fall. The 7th annual Force Health Protection Conference takes place in Albuquerque, New Mexico on August 9-12. This free conference focuses on exploring new advances in technology and information related to a "fit and ready force". In September, Washington DC will host the 35th annual International Congress on Military Medicine (ICMM). This oldest and largest international military medical organization will feature 'Humanitarian Assistance for Natural and Man-Made Disasters' as its topic of main discussion. Also in September, the 42nd annual meeting of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) will be held in Boston (September 30-October 3). This meeting consists of 4 days of broad continuing educational courses in the fields of emerging infections, pathophysiology, new diagnostics, treatment and prevention. Finally, on October 30-November 2, the 44th Interscience Conference on Antimicrobial Agents & Chemotherapy (ICAAC) will be held in Washington DC. Held by the American Society for Microbiology, this conference introduces new antimicrobial agents, analyzes the resistance of pathogens to diverse treatments, and provides new data on infectious diseases that are spread throughout the world. For information on any of these conferences, please visit the websites listed below:

http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/fhp
https://fhp.osd.mil/congress/
http://www.idsociety.org
http://www.icaac.org

Health Officials Warn about a Deadly Mosquito-Borne Illness

Although it has not yet reached the United States, the mosquito-borne Rift Valley Fever proves to be more of a danger to humans than the West Nile Virus, according to Dr. Thomas Ksiazek, chief of the special pathogens branch of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. And just like the West Nile Virus did in 1999, this virus can appear out of nowhere. What makes Rift Valley Fever more of a threat to humans is the fact that at least 30 species of mosquitoes are capable of carrying the virus, and it is also transmissible through handling blood or fluids of infected animals. The virus kills up to 30 percent of the livestock it infects. It is also more deadly to humans than West Nile, with a near 1 percent mortality rate. Flu-like illness is the main symptom for most people; however, illness can progress to hemorrhagic fever, encephalitis, and ocular disease (1-10% suffer some permanent vision loss). The virus, first identified in a 1930 outbreak in Kenya's Rift Valley, had not left the continent until 2000 when it showed up as an outbreak in Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Over 800 people became ill and almost 200 died from this virus. Since then, there have been no reports of new cases. There is no indication that this virus will reach the United States in the near future, but without vaccinations and medical preparedness, the virus could spread quickly between humans and livestock, causing a tremendous blow to the United States.